

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief John R. Batiste**

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## **Washington Ranked #1 for Enforcement of Problem Drivers Surrounding Commercial Motor Vehicles**

According to a recent American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) study, Washington State is ranked number one in the country as having more traffic enforcement and lower crashes involving commercial motor vehicles. The top states were found to be more likely to formally develop "best practices" or "lessons learned" from traffic enforcement and other enforcement initiatives focused on commercial motor vehicle drivers. The ATRI research identified four major strategies as highly effective programs or tactics for addressing problem driving behavior.

- Centering on aggressive driving apprehension programs/initiatives.
- Targeting both commercial motor vehicles (CMV) and non-CMV behavior patterns.
- Utilizing both highly visible and covert enforcement activities.
- Incorporating an internal performance-based system for managing enforcement by specific crash types, driver behaviors, and locations.

WSP commanders use a process to critically look at collision and enforcement statistics to determine location and behaviors which contribute most to serious collisions. "Using objective data allows us to move resources around and change our enforcement strategies to combat aggressive driving behaviors. Commercial Vehicle Division (CVD) statistics show that 68% of the fatality collisions involving a commercial vehicle and a passenger car were the fault of the passenger car," said Captain Coral Estes, CVD. "We take these trends very seriously as an agency, and develop education and enforcement strategies to address these concerns and ultimately make our roads safer."

The WSP established the Aggressive Driving Apprehension Team (ADAT) throughout the state, using unmarked cars to target aggressive drivers. In addition the WSP developed an aggressive driving Web site through which citizens can report aggressive drivers to the WSP. This information is sent to District Commanders throughout the state and used to deploy officers to areas where there are higher incidents of aggressive driving.

From January to October 2005, the State Patrol has contacted 43,685 aggressive drivers, an increase from the 39,717 contacts made during the same period in 2004. The Aggressive ADAT, which is made up of 43 troopers across the state, was responsible for 26% of the aggressive driving contacts.

CVD has ten unmarked patrol vehicles to specifically combat aggressively driven commercial vehicles and cars driving in a hazardous manner around commercial vehicles.

The WSP gained national attention when in 2005 the agency partnered with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Washington State Department of Transportation, the trucking industry, and federal agencies for the Ticket Aggressive Cars and Trucks (TACT) campaign. TACT is an enforcement and education strategy where troopers ride in trucks and call ahead to other officers their observations and a vehicle description. The vehicle is subsequently stopped and appropriate enforcement taken.

"Using programs like this, the CVD is actively addressing the problem of aggressive driving in Washington State," said Chief John R. Batiste. "We are very honored to be recognized for our hard work and dedication to this issue, but at the same time we know that as long as there are still deaths occurring on our highways, there is still work for us to do."

For additional information about the study contact Virginia Dick, ATRI Research Associate, at (770) 432-0628.

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